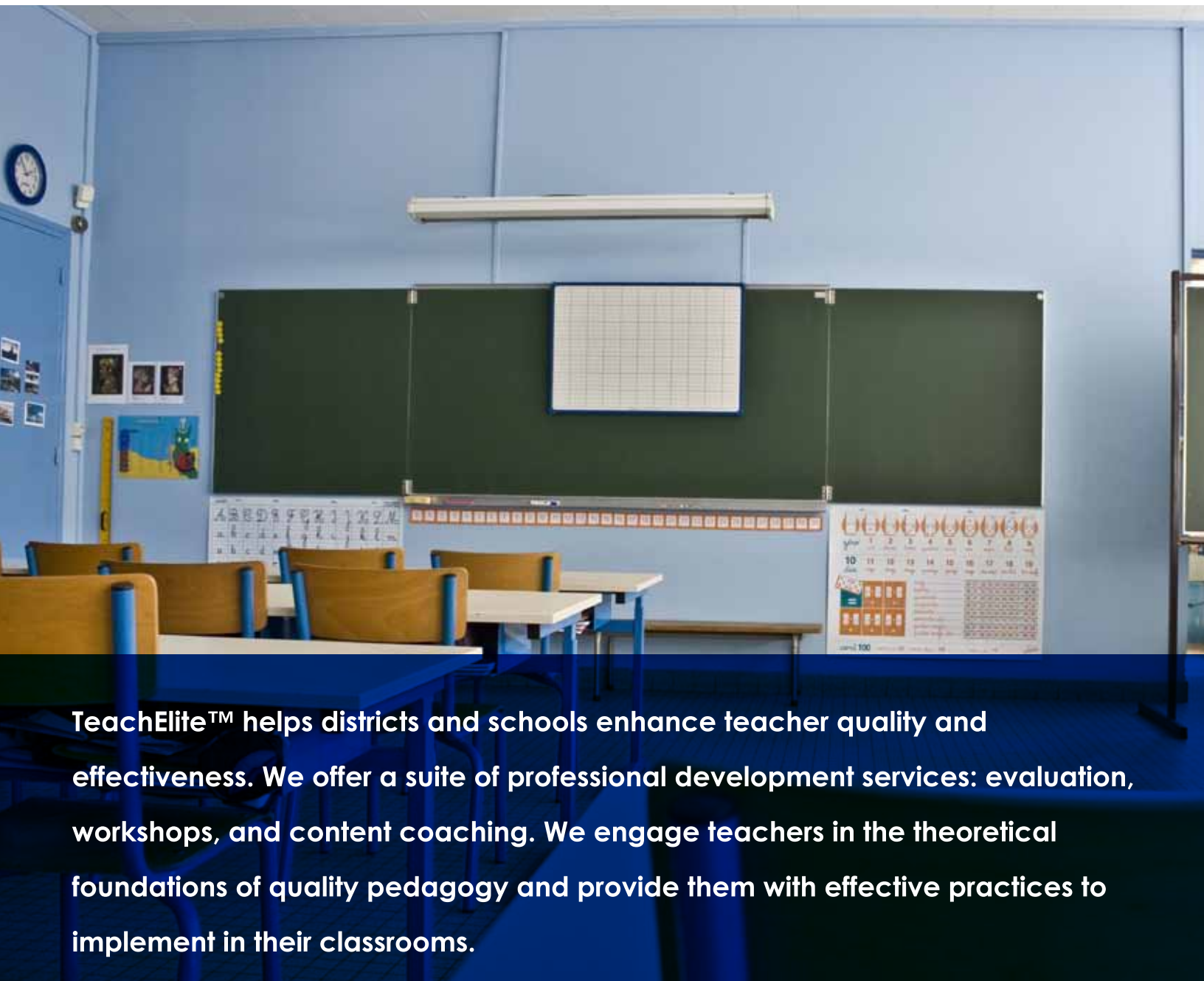




Inspired Teachers. Improved Classrooms.

Evaluation. Workshops. Coaching.





TeachElite™ helps districts and schools enhance teacher quality and effectiveness. We offer a suite of professional development services: evaluation, workshops, and content coaching. We engage teachers in the theoretical foundations of quality pedagogy and provide them with effective practices to implement in their classrooms.



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SmartStart Education™

SmartStart Education™ is a diversified provider of educational services on the cutting edge of educational reform in the United States and abroad. Having worked with over one hundred school districts, hundreds of schools, thousands of teachers and over ten thousand students, we pride ourselves on our ability to partner with school districts, helping them to prepare students for success in the global marketplace. Our track record of success is built on a foundation of high-quality school administration, teaching, learning and producing measurable results for our partner school districts and their students.

English Language Learners and Special Needs

We have extensive experience working with English Language Learners (ELL) and special needs populations. Over 95% of the students that our programs impact are ethnic/racial minorities, nearly 25% are ELL students and nearly 15% of our students are identified as having special needs. Our philosophy is that one-size-fits-all approaches to classroom instruction are not inclusive and respectful of individual differences in student learning. Our programs are designed to empower teachers to engage all of their students, regardless of ability level, cultural background, special education status, gender or socio-economic status.

SmartStart Education's™ Services

SmartStart Education's™ services are designed to provide districts with a total solution for their academic and school improvement needs. We work with administrators, teachers, students and parents. Our innovative, research-based programs are designed to improve professional practice and increase student academic achievement. SmartStart Education™ prides itself on providing partner schools and districts with targeted and relevant services that meet the needs of their particular population through our SmartStart Virtual Academy™, Smarties Tutoring Services™, Connections™, and TeachElite™ divisions.



SmartStart Virtual Academy™

SmartStart Virtual Academy™ (SVA) provides a range of online and blended accredited courses. We offer innovative and engaging online content designed to help students succeed. SVA's course catalog includes over 100 classes in mathematics, language arts, science, social studies, technology, and more. Our curriculum is aligned to the Common Core State Standards, State Content Standards for all 50 states, and taught by state certified teachers.



Smarties Tutoring Services™

Smarties Tutoring Services™ partners with schools to meet their students' academic needs through academic intervention programs in language arts and mathematics. Smarties Tutoring Services™ specializes in working with students with disabilities and English Language Learners. Our staff of professional educators work with principals, curriculum coordinators, and classroom teachers to develop a customized program specifically designed to meet the needs of students at risk of failure and dropout. In addition to helping students raise their test scores, Smarties Tutoring Services™ is effective at improving students' motivation, behavior, and learning in both the classroom and at home.



Connections™

Connections™ helps schools work with parents to get them more involved in their children's learning and in-school activities. SmartStart Education™ recognizes that the academic success of all students requires more than a research-based curriculum and highly effective teachers in every classroom. Parents, schools, and communities must partner in order to realize substantial gains in student achievement. As such, SmartStart Education™ offers a myriad of parent workshops that focus on parenting, communication, elementary school learning, and middle and high school learning. All of our workshops are aligned with National Parent Teacher Association Standards.



TeachElite™

TeachElite™, SmartStart Education's™ professional development arm, provides schools with a complete suite of teacher development programs. Our TeachElite™ evaluation aligns with states' Professional Practice Standards and federal mandates. It serves as an instructional diagnostic tool that Local Education Agencies (LEAs) can use to help make decisions, fix accountability problems, and aid in planning and preparing. TeachElite™ evaluation allows districts to identify strengths and weaknesses among their staff and improve student growth. SmartStart's™ professional development programs help improve teachers' practice and effectiveness. We offer coaching in math and literacy through the Gradual Release Model of Coaching. We evaluate a teacher's needs, model appropriate pedagogical strategies and behaviors, and follow-up to ensure that teachers are including lessons learned in their instructional practice. SmartStart Education™ also offers a variety of high quality professional development workshops. We engage teachers in the theoretical foundations of quality pedagogy and provide them with effective practices to implement in their classrooms.



Overview of TeachElite™

EVALUATION

Teacher Practice Rubric • Performance Evaluation System • Learning Management System

Instructional Practice

- Formative Assessment
- Differentiated Instruction
- Teaching ELLs

Parental Engagement

- Can We Talk?
- Positive Communication
- Cyber-Safety
- Creating a Working Partnership

Instructional Practice

- Intensive 5-day training
- Gradual Release Model
- Cooperative
- Focus on continuous improvement

RESULTS

Improved Instructional
Practice, Skill & Capacity

Improved Student
Performance

Increased Parent
Engagement & Support



Over the past decade, Federal, State Education Agencies (SEAs), and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) have endorsed a variety of programs and policies designed to: (1) improve teacher quality, (2) improve the rigor of classroom instruction and course content, and (3) improve student achievement. A central tenet underlying these reform initiatives is that high quality teachers and rigorous instruction directly lead to improved student achievement. Research shows that the number one gauge of a student's success in school is the quality of the teacher in the classroom. (Center for High Impact Philanthropy, 2010, p. 7)

Central Purpose

Recognizing the importance of a fair, impartial, and comprehensive assessment of teacher quality and effectiveness, SmartStart Education™ has designed the TeachElite™ evaluation. The central purpose of the TeachElite™ evaluation is to provide a reliable, fair, comprehensive, and flexible system to assess teacher quality.

Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria were used to develop the component instruments for the TeachElite™ evaluation:

- The instruments were derived from a strong theoretical and empirical foundation that explicitly outlines the major components of teacher quality.
- The instruments used are both reliable and valid.
- The evaluation system is easy to implement and cost-effective; thus, it provides districts with a high return on investment.

In order to ensure reliability and validity, SmartStart Education™ implemented a three-step process to develop the instrument.

1.

A comprehensive literature review to assist in the development of specific content areas and item generation for the instrument.

2.

A targeted, open-ended survey of teachers and administrators. The information gathered complemented the literature review and provided additional context for the generation of items for survey development.

3.

A pilot study of the assessment instruments. The data gathered from the pilot study was used to further refine the instrument and enhance its internal consistency and validity.

Six Components of Teacher Effectiveness

TeachElite™ evaluation measures six components of teacher effectiveness with a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures. TeachElite™ evaluation takes a balanced approach to measurement. For example, student achievement gains are a core component of the TeachElite™ evaluation. However, while some evaluation systems assess gains solely with standardized achievement scores, TeachElite™ evaluation uses a weighted approach that takes standardized achievement into account, but may include teacher assigned classroom grades and a portfolio assessment of student work products. Since each state has its own teacher performance measurement criteria, TeachElite™ evaluation provides a flexible and customizable set of weighting criteria. Furthermore, the data collected as part of the TeachElite™ evaluation can be used to meet state-defined evaluative criteria.

Conceptualized as a Diagnostic Tool

TeachElite™ evaluation is best conceptualized as a diagnostic tool that can identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas in need of improvement. Teachers are rated on a four star system.



The rating categories allow teachers to get a clear picture of their current performance. Each district can easily identify its highly effective teachers and also teachers who are identified as needing improvement in certain areas.



Gates Foundation Measuring Effective Teaching Project (MET)

After a comprehensive literature review, the Gates Foundation Measuring Effective Teaching Project (MET) definition of teacher/teaching effectiveness was chosen as the main theoretical model to guide the development and structure of SmartStart's TeachElite™ evaluation. Based on MET's work, TeachElite™ evaluation measures the following empirically-derived components of teacher effectiveness:

1. Student Achievement Gains
2. Lesson Plan Review
3. Semi-Structured Teacher Interview
4. Professional Rights and Responsibilities
5. Classroom Observation
6. Teachers' Pedagogical Content Knowledge
7. Teacher's Perceptions of Working Conditions and Instructional Support
8. Student Perceptions of Classroom Pedagogical Environment
9. Parent Perceptions

Intuitive and Systematic

The evaluation process is intuitive and systematic. SmartStart Education™ offers an extensive training to evaluators on our evaluation process, easy to use database, and best practices. Further, we offer training for teachers on how to use our system and on what to expect from the evaluation. Further, we offer districts ongoing support throughout the implementation of the evaluation. Our monitoring ensures that the evaluation process runs smoothly and the results are valid and reliable.

Targeted Professional Development

Because it identifies areas for teaching practice improvement, TeachElite™ evaluation assists schools and LEAs in identifying targeted professional development that focuses on particular teachers and specific areas of practice. TeachElite™ evaluation is designed to be part of a district's total solution of evaluation and professional development. In order to support and improve teacher quality and effectiveness, SmartStart Education™ offers workshops and embedded instructional coaching.



TeachElite™ Professional Development Workshops

TeachElite™ evaluation is complemented by rigorous, focused professional development to support teachers' continuous growth. TeachElite™ evaluation provides the benefit of identifying areas of weakness so professional development can be more targeted to the teachers' and districts' needs. Research is clear that teachers matter more to student learning than any other in-school factor. Improving the quality of teaching is critical to student success (MET Project, 2012). SmartStart's™ TeachElite™ workshops and content coaching are designed to improve the quality of teaching.

TeachElite™ professional development is designed around research-documented practices that enable educators to develop the skills necessary to implement what they are learning. It is based on curricular and instructional strategies that have a high probability of affecting student learning (Joyce & Showers, 2002). Our professional development deepens teachers' knowledge of the subject area they are teaching and sharpens their skills in the classroom. Our workshops generate and contribute new knowledge to the profession. We support teachers in their efforts to assess and monitor student work in order to provide constructive feedback to the students and appropriately redirect teaching.

Professional Development Workshops

SmartStart Education's™ TeachElite™ professional development workshops prepare teachers to deliver instruction effectively, both to struggling students and advanced learners. Our workshops are designed to prepare teachers to use various types of performance assessment in their classrooms and to administer, interpret, and effectively use data to inform instruction. All of our TeachElite™ workshops are grounded in scientifically-based research.



“The process of improving staff skills and competencies needed to produce outstanding educational results for students”

(Hassel, 1999)

Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

SmartStart Education's™ TeachElite™ professional development programs have been specifically designed to address the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in grades K through 12 for English Language Arts and Mathematics. In developing the TeachElite™ series of professional development workshops, our approach focused exclusively on building the content around empirically derived and validated pedagogical strategies that improve both instructional practice and student achievement.

With specific reference to the CCSS, our workshops:

- Provide specialized CCSS content instruction (i.e. Response to Intervention (RTI) strategies in Mathematics, English Language Arts, Science, and ELL.)
- Focus on giving teachers practical experience in developing and implementing formative assessment in their daily instructional practice.
- Give teachers practical experience in developing activities based on Webb's Depth of Knowledge criteria.
- Give teachers practical experience in using student achievement data to differentiate instruction.
- Show teachers how to coordinate instructional activities across grade levels to facilitate instructional shifts.

Our workshops align with schools' and districts' needs and schedules. We offer half and full-day programs.



“One constant finding in the research literature is that notable improvements in education almost never take place in the absence of professional development”

Guskey (2000, p.4)

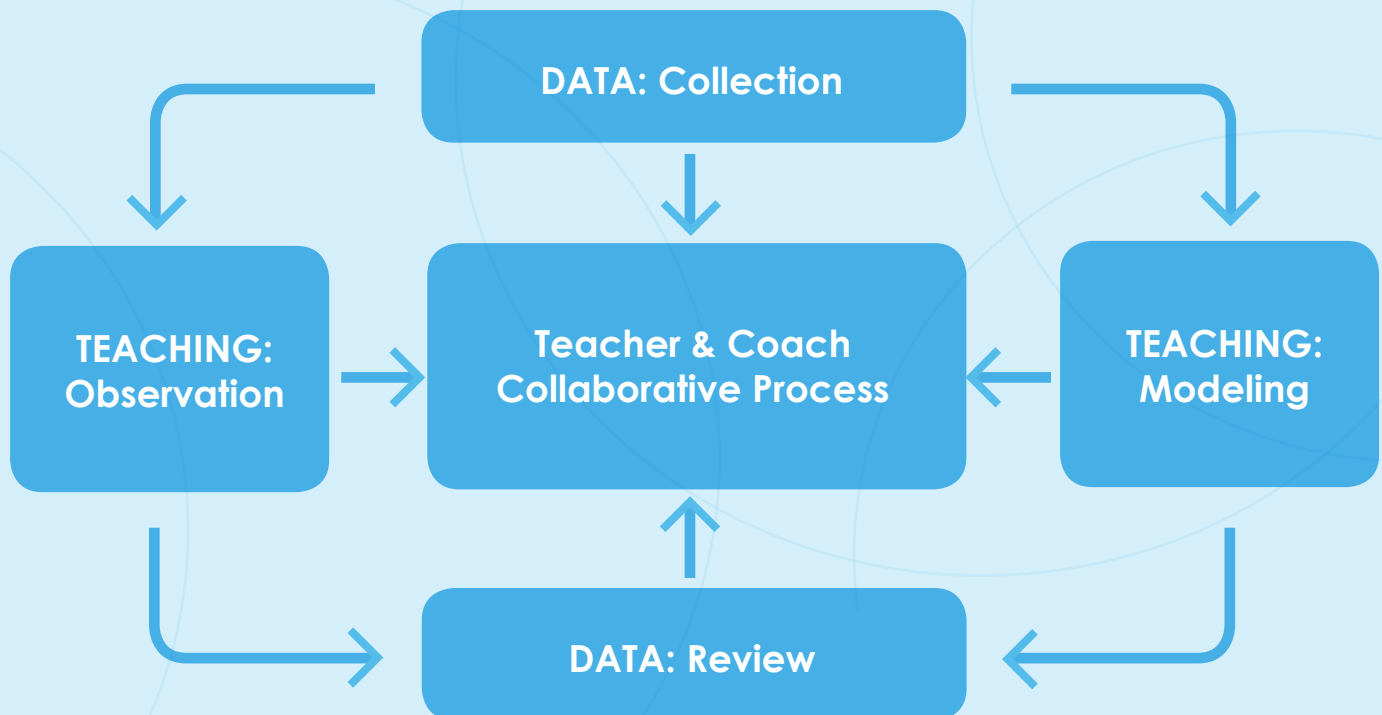


Instructional Content Coaching

SmartStart Education's™ targeted workshops can be used as a foundation for more in-depth professional development through content coaching. Coaching shifts professional learning from direct instruction outside the context of practice to more varied opportunities to improve discipline-specific practice.

Research has shown that high-quality, ongoing, teacher professional development deepens teachers' content knowledge and pedagogical skills. TeachElite™ provides opportunities for practice, research, and reflection, and includes efforts that are job-embedded, sustained, and collaborative (Sparks, 2002).

SmartStart Education's™ TeachElite™ Coaching Model



Gradual Release Model

SmartStart Education's™ instructional coaching is grounded in current research and clinical knowledge on leadership and schools as “professional communities of practice.” Professional development is most effective when it includes components that are embedded in teachers' jobs and when it increases teachers' theoretical understandings of their work (Miller, 1995). We employ the Gradual Release Model to ensure that our work is manifested in teachers' classrooms.

TeachElite™ content coaches take teachers through the following stages:

1. Build Common Knowledge and Experience	2. Commit to a Learning Relationship	3. Coach / Teacher Build a Co-Teaching Relationship	4. Teacher Transitions to Guided Practice with Coaching Support	5. Teacher Refines Implementation with Coaching Feedback
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Coaching Provides Supports

SmartStart's™ coaching provides supports through an array of activities designed to build collective leadership and continuously improve teacher instructional capacity and student learning. An essential feature of SmartStart Education's™ coaching is that it uses the relationships between coaches, principals, and teachers to create the conversation that leads to behavioral, pedagogical, and content knowledge change.

SmartStart Education's™ TeachElite™ instructional coaching in the context of a school-embedded professional learning community has numerous positive pedagogical impacts, including:

- Encouraging collaborative, reflective practice.
- Promoting positive cultural change.
- Encouraging the use of data analysis to inform practice.
- Promoting the implementation of learning and reciprocal accountability.
- Supporting collective, interconnected leadership across a school system.

SmartStart Education™ offers TeachElite™ content coaching in five day intervals. The specific schedule is developed to ensure that it meets local needs and maximizes benefits.

Key Features

- 5-day intensive focus.
- Encourages collaborative, reflective practice.
- Promotes positive cultural change.
- Encourages the use of data analysis to inform practice.
- Promotes the implementation of learning and reciprocal accountability.
- Supports collective, interconnected leadership across a school system.





SmartStart Education's™ Specialists

Knowledgeable and Skilled Specialists

SmartStart Education™ employs knowledgeable and skilled specialists in order to provide the best support for curriculum implementation, classroom instructional strategies, and assessment tools to elementary, middle, and/or high school administrators and teachers. SmartStart's™ specialists provide access to research, examples of best practice, and direction about how other schools or districts have managed specific phases of the process for change. Our specialists enable educators to develop the knowledge and skills they need to address students' learning challenges.

Our staff developers have:

- Significant teaching and administrative/teacher leader experience (minimum 5-10 years).
- Experience in more than one school, and often in different districts and states.
- Knowledge of and background in leading groups of teachers to learn about and employ instructional models and best-practices.
- 3+ years of experience with coaching, leading teachers, and professional development.
- Excellent writing, interpersonal skills, and verbal communication skills.
- Expertise with ELL and Special Education.

Although all of SmartStart Education's™ staff development is derived from scientifically-based research, we continuously observe our specialists and our programs; we evaluate them and make the necessary adjustments to our program and trainings in order to best meet the school district's and state's requirements.



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